

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

May 26, 2016

Ms. Laura K. Vaught
Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 3426 ARN
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. Vaught,

I have recently been contacted by several of my constituents (13) concerned with art glass regulations. Attached please find a copy of that correspondence.

I would appreciate it if you could look into this matter and provide me with an appropriate response. Thank you.

Sincerely,



MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator

MRW/ma

Last week, Spectrum Glass in Washington announced that, after 40 years of producing colored art glass, they will be closing their doors in July. They are the main American manufacturer of colored art glass used in stained glass, fused glass, glass blowing, and more. This closure affects an estimated 30,000 Stained Glass, Fused Glass and Glass Blowing Artists, Stores, Art Studios and Hobbyists across America with countless more businesses and artists being affected world-wide. Fortunately, arrangements have been made for Uroboros Glass in Oregon state to take over production of some of their Art Glass Product line. But there is still a huge problem threatening the American Art Glass Community.

The entire U.S. art glass industry is now being evaluated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with respect to potential new regulations. Spectrum is the first to announce its closure, but other glass producing companies are also evaluating their options. Uroboros Glass has suspended production of two-thirds of their product line while EPA re-evaluates their standards. Bullseye Glass has been served a Cease and Desist order and is prohibited from producing 90% of their product line and is being forced to lay off employees. Long-standing interpretations of air quality regulations are being reevaluated, and if new regulations are applied to our industry, it would require substantial capital expenses. Uroboros and Bullseye have been proactively working on installing baghouse technology to capture emissions and they have voluntarily stopped production and been very compliant with all EPA and DEQ requests. Spectrum Glass Company has operated well within existing environmental guidelines and has been the only stained glass manufacturer to employ baghouse technology on furnace exhaust. Still, they have already accrued extraordinary, unanticipated expenses since the start of the EPA evaluation and cannot withstand additional investments of an unknown scale. These business collapses will have a ripple effect across the country.

What you need to know:

- The stained and colored glass industry is a small, but home grown American manufacturing phenomenon. It's unique in the world, provides steady manufacturing jobs for American workers, and is an exporting industry as well.
- This industry of just six manufacturers is facing at least \$2.5-3.5 million of capital investment due to regulatory changes with no advance warning. This investment may prove too much for several of them to bear.
- Government intervention is needed for them to meet the goals of the new regulations in such a short time frame.
- The industry is willing to meet new regulations, but it needs reasonable time to do so in addition to regulations being based in science and not sensationalized journalism - which has largely been the case so far with the Portland, Oregon EPA activities.
- The manufacturers are all owned by single individuals and their families, who work daily at their plants. They don't have the resources of publicly traded corporations to simply pay up and move on.
- These manufacturers supply tens of thousands of other businesses and craftsmen who depend on their unique glass styles to complete their work. They are now at risk of being put out of work themselves.

- The very suppliers who have created the iconic glass of the American stained glass legacy are at risk due to this situation.
- There is currently no actual verification that the glass industry is connected to the detected toxins. EPA did moss testing, a new science, which raised public concern. They retested and found the levels to be safe. The current EPA review and imposed freeze of production is all based in fear not fact. No other industries are under investigation in the area. Glass manufacturing has been singled out and two businesses cannot realistically be the source of 100% of all heavy metal pollution in Portland. This looks more and more like a witch-hunt to shut down an industry, not an honest effort to protect the environment.

I want to protect the environment, but I do not want to crush an American Art Industry on assumed causation. I want the EPA to investigate every business in Portland that uses heavy metals. Not just two businesses. Regulations need to be put in place for all industries, not just glass, and sufficient time needs to be given to all industries to install the appropriate technologies to improve the quality of their environment.

Please do whatever you can to prevent the loss of small businesses, jobs, and entire art form from the American landscape. The American Art Glass community needs your help.

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